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THE VETO

THE RE is nothing either good or bad, only your politics makes it so. When in early December last year the Russians vetoed a resolution backed by most members of the Security Council urging an immediate ceasefire in the Indo-Pakistani war, the veto was alright. It was also alright when a General Assembly resolution supported by 104 members was ignored. The Chinese veto is another matter because it does not suit us.

A ceasefire at least would have saved some lives. But the Chinese veto on the UN entry of Bangladesh is just a matter of wounded prestige. Bangladesh will not have to wait for years to enter the UN. The Chinese have referred to the issues of Pakistani prisoners of war and the presence of foreign troops, in Bangladesh. The latter has been denied. But did people know that Mujib had asked Indian troops to operate in the Chittagong Hill Tracts until a British paper reported it? Rumours about Indian troops in Bangladesh have persisted after that, thanks to some Bangladesh papers. Had the Indian Government announced the joint operations in the Chittagong Hill Tracts without waiting for leaks, such rumours would not have been believed.

As for the prisoners of war, the UN resolution is there. Some of the troops have committed grave crimes, in a civil war. Since preparations for a trial have been going on for quite some time, the list of names must be ready. The rest can go home. But their return seems to depend, in the first place, on Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh. Bhutto wants to meet Mujib before deciding—Mujib had promised to talk to him. But that was before his release. By meeting even a slippery Bhutto Mujib will not be committing himself to anything, whereas recognition is a substantive matter that might undermine Bhutto's political position at home. The troops have become pawns in a game of chess, watched by grandmasters.

That these troops surrendered to the joint command is sort of an argument for trilateral talks. If the joint command was a hard reality, if the Mukti Bahini, operating from Indian territory, had been so effective a force, why did Mujib, instead of relying wholly on the Bahini to mop up the insurgents in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, ask for Indian help? A force which could defeat a formidable Pakistani army in a record time should have been adequate for the task. And, by the way, why there

has never been concern about the casualties suffered by the Mukti Bahini in the course of its gigantic task? If memory is not that short, didn't the Indian command urge the Pakistanis to surrender to Indian troops, and not to others if they wanted security? So some credence should be lent to those who doubt the legend of the joint command.

Meanwhile, the question of return of the thousands of Bengali officers and troops and civilians is not causing any concern in Bangladesh. Perhaps their return will upset the order of seniority of the present incumbents in the Bangladesh administration.

The Chinese veto has created a lot of resentment in Bangladesh and will be used to intensify the drive against left elements. From the outset, a passion for being recognised has marked the middle classes of Bangladesh. Perhaps this is a reflection of the uneasy conscience about how the new State came into being. There are brave, self-reliant nations that do not cry themselves hoarse for instant recognition. The Chinese veto, of course, will deprive the General Assembly, for a time, of the opportunity of hearing the thundering voice of Mujib, but it will also save Bangladesh the expenses of a trip to the USA of an entire family and entourage.

Gimmicks And Guns

The true and only leader that she is, Mrs Indira Gandhi has given the lead. All credit goes to her for the brilliant idea to celebrate the silver jubilee of Indian independence for full one year during which period all talk of the crushing poverty of the masses and her failure to make any progress towards "garibi hatao" will be damned as unpatriotic and anti-national. This will give her sufficient time to think up a few more gimmicks which should last till it is time for the next parliamentary election which will be held when the country will probably be

in the midst of celebrating the silver jubilee of the Indian Republic. Between the celebrations of one silver jubilee and that of another, her present term will be over, and she will face the electorate with another bunch of promises and a brand new slogan. Perhaps she is already giving thought to it, for the road to electoral victory seems strewn with never-to-be-fulfilled promises.

On a smaller and less adroit scale, her protegee in West Bengal is trying the same method. Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray is hopping from one stunt to another in an attempt to divert attention from the utter incompetence of his Government and its dismal failure to come to grips with any of the problems of the State. In the six months he has been in office, the plight of the people has deteriorated. All the grand promises have proved a grand hoax. Prices are running away so fast with the average citizen's purse that the chase has been given up; Calcutta, he has said, will have to live with waterlogging for another five years—probably to lay the ground for a multi-million "Vana Mahotsava" which will turn it into a city of gardens; the pledge to reach electricity to every village in the State is being implemented in such earnest that not only the villages are not seeing the light, but even Calcutta and its industrial suburbs are going without power for several hours every day to the inconvenience of the public and providing a pretext to employers to retrench and lay off; unable to recover for the State any of its lost glories the Ministry has, by its inaction, seen to it that West Bengal gets the pride of place in the matter of unemployment in the country.

The first of Mr Ray's recent attempts to divert public attention has proved a miserable flop from the Government's point of view. Lakhs have been spent on the much-publicized spectacle at Ranji Stadium, but the return has been a few thousand of rupees. The show was stopped hurriedly when it dawned on the

Government that in the apolitical citizen the spectacle may create an impression that independence has not changed police behaviour, that if the police have not become more brutal, they remain at least as brutal as they were in the days of the Raj. This has been followed by the innovation of a travelling Cabinet; the week-end excursions and feasting at government expense will be a side-pleasure for the Ministers who will try to sell themselves to the sullen people. The not-so-apparent purpose of weekend Cabinet meetings in the districts is to prevent truancy by individual Ministers. Internal equables in the party and the Cabinet have come to a point when a Minister at large cannot be trusted, for he can go to any length to debunk his rival colleague and group. Ministers generally tour their constituencies on weekends; now they will remain engaged and under watch.

But the Government has realised that such palliatives will not be able to hold the party together or contain public discontent. The crisis in the party will come to a head over enrolment of members with each faction trying to get control of the party units with spurious rolls. Representations have already been made at the Delhi durbar, and there will be more of them in the coming weeks. With the ruling party in disarray, administration will further go downhill. Lest public discontent should explode, student and youth workers of the Congress have been let loose. Their first action has been against two or three Bengali periodicals that were threatened with closure by a youth leader a few days ago; a bonfire of the periodicals has been made and the hawkers roughed up. The Government itself has now come forward to vest police powers in the Congress volunteers who have been authorised to unearth bogus ration cards. This will enable them to intimidate and harass the average citizen into submission and silence. Clearly, the Government has forearmed itself against the proposed agitation by the Left parties.

Power, Power

The non-policy on power development is coming home to roost. Nearly the whole of the country is now in the throes of an acute power shortage and it is only a question of time before other far more serious problems set in in its trail. A foretaste of things to come is already there. Industries are preparing to lay off workers, accentuating the unemployment problem. Industrial production, already alarmingly down, is bound to decline further. And the entire economy is likely to be pulled down to a still lower level of activity. The deficiency in planning has been exposed so starkly that even the authorities have now stopped trying to explain away the situation. The Power and Irrigation Minister, Dr K. E. Rao, who cannot possibly absolve himself of the responsibility for such a crisis—he has been in charge of the ministry for nearly a decade now—has already warned that the power shortage, which is already bad, may be worse still next year. M. S. Pathak, member, Planning Commission, would not describe it as bad as that and has indicated that both short-term and long-term measures would soon be taken to tackle the situation. He has hinted at the possibility of nationwide power rationing to make the best of a bad situation. And remember: all this after 21 years of planning and a surfeit of "breakthrough stories"!

Though caught in a tight spot, Rao has not, however, lost his characteristic agility to conjure up enticing visions for the future. Plans are afoot to raise the installed capacity to 40 million megawatts in the Fifth Plan. The operational efficiency of the power stations, which he concedes is rather low at the moment, is also to be improved. More immediately, the situation would take a turn for the better when big projects like the Idikki and Kalpakkam are commissioned. New Delhi is also known to be examining the implications of takeover of the privately-

owned power stations in the country, as suggested by the Kureel Committee. But the experience gathered so far in this line points out to some clear conclusions. First, the Government must give up its infatuation with big prestige projects. One thing or the other always seems to go wrong with them; it may be delay in delivery of equipment or slow progress in construction work or something like that. Smaller projects, depending more on natural advantages, should be preferred. Secondly, the lack of coordination between the suppliers of equipment and the buyers has reached alarming proportions, and since public sector undertakings are mostly involved in such deals, New Delhi should take more stringent steps to streamline their working. And, thirdly, implementation of regional power grids should be expedited. Even the existing rigours of power shortage can be considerably lessened if the States practise a more liberal give and take policy. That they do not and can still get away with it undoubtedly underlines a not too edifying aspect of Indian nationalism.

Friends Of Papadopoulos

There is no reason why one should believe that the Americans ever exerted any kind of pressure on the Greek military junta to be a little humane. The game has so often been played in the past that one was hardly surprised when in the midst of reports in the Press that the Americans were trying to influence General Papadopoulos to introduce "democracy" by a definite time, came the restructuring of the Greek Cabinet. It gave more authority and new governmental responsibility to army officers. The official justification that the reordering was necessary for giving a boost to the economy was not convincing; the more likely explanation was that the junta wanted to take no chance when discontent was mounting among all sections of

the people, particularly students. General Papadopoulos must have been assured by the Americans that there will be no protest in future against any repressive measure that he may take—the Americans will be spared embarrassment if only repression does not take so crude a form as to set off an international reaction. Yesterday's critics of the Greek regime, namely, William Rogers and Joseph Sisco, are today saying different things. When they were in Athens last month neither of them had anything unpleasant to say about the military regime; on the contrary the hope was expressed that the two countries would work for further improvement in their relations. This is as it should be. Greece occupies the most important place in America's Mediterranean strategic considerations. Indispensable for the defence of the south-east flank of NATO, the Greek ports have assumed added significance for the Americans since they lost the military facilities in Libya. Washington has never doubted the fidelity of the military junta to the "Atlantic ideal". General Papadopoulos knows it well that his regime will not survive a day without American munificence. The money that American tourists spend in Greece constitutes 60% of the country's earnings from tourism. Athens can always expect the American banks coming forward to cover the deficit in the balance of payments. The most important foreign investor in Greece is the USA. Apart from two billion dollars in military aid and 200 million dollars in the form of economic assistance, Greece receives other indirect help through Nato. The Americans are convinced that no other Government will be as effective as the present military junta to suppress all anti-American and democratic movements.

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Nixon's Bluffs

Saigon is a rumour city. And more often than not these rumours are hatched and reared by the U.S. diplomats in Saigon and in far-away Washington. The latest in this political game is the reported accord between Washington and Hanoi in the Paris peace talks. Kissinger's air-dash to Saigon for a closed-door meeting with Thieu and North Vietnam's chief delegate, Le Duc Tho's return to Hanoi via Moscow and Peking provided the gossiping diplomats with the grist. But the main encouragement has come from President Nixon himself. Though the White House is more than usually tight-lipped over the situation in Paris, Mr Nixon's declaration that Vietnam peace prospects have never been better, has helped the rumour stories more than anything else.

If all the variants of these stories are pieced together, the whole thing comes to that a new working principle might have been proposed, after each side giving in a bit of its original stand. And now efforts are being made to sound Thieu's reaction or assure him about his future. Some political observers have, however, dismissed all these as day-dreaming and tend to write off the whole show as just another diplomatic ploy. Maybe, the sceptics will go to the devil and the peace forecasters will be upheld. But the all important question is whether all these will end the fighting and the Americans leave?

Not for nothing is Kissinger shunting between the capitals, and all these diplomatic manoeuvres may not be without some significance. Mr Nixon wants peace but he wants peace with the draft-dodging American youths, grumbling middle-class and other marginal voters at home, and not with the communists fighting in Vietnam. His Peking trip, Moscow talks and dramatic gestures in Paris and elsewhere are meant to bluff the world. Control of Saigon

and South-East Asia remains his primary world objective. Only military reverses and the difficult economic situation have forced him to change the tactics. Some concessions might also be in the offing.

But behind this smokescreen of open talk, secret talk and negotiations he has been bombing and destroying the land and people of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. A few dissident Americans like Ramsey Clark or well-intentioned ecologists in Stockholm have tried to reveal the

deadly game the Americans are playing in Indochina. But such disconcerted efforts cannot rattle Nixon. Despite the Democrats' effort to revive the Vietnam issue and the recent debate in Washington on whether Nixon muffed a communist peace signal in 1968, Nixon has played his duplicity well. The Gallup opinion poll shows the Vietnam war as a standoff issue in the election. What Nixon has failed to do, however, is to beat the communists on the field or hoodwink them in the negotiations.

Room At The Top Brighter

Hot on the heels of the management takeover of IISCO, there was a rumour that TISCO was also on the cards. Mr J. R. D. Tata's speech at the annual meeting of the Company lent some credibility to the rumour. He said that TISCO was practically in the joint sector, with the Government holding about 40 per cent of the company shares. The statement was supposed to be a feeler to the shareholders for their psychological preparation for the eventual takeover. Mr M. Kumaramangalam indicated in the Rajya Sabha the other day that the Government would take over TISCO if it felt that the takeover was in the interest of the country. TISCO is a very well-managed firm, very unlike IISCO. It promises to pay a good dividend this year and with the recent steel price increases approved by the Government, its profit outlook is not worse than last year's. If such a good firm can be taken over, and a firm of the Tatas, the doyen of Indian industrialists at that, what is in store for other big industrialists? People might think that, whatever the leftists might say, Mrs Gandhi certainly means socialist business.

No doubt about that. Mrs Gandhi means business. But the working of the Monopolies Commission indicates that she means monopoly business. Mr Raghunath Reddy, the Company Affairs Minister, could not

but admit in the Rajya Sabha that between 1966 and 1970 (which is by the way the exact period Mrs Gandhi was plump in the seat of authority), there was a 30 per cent increase in the assets of the 10 top business houses in the country.

It is intriguing to see that Mafatlals and Birlas have made it quite good compared to the others. Mafatlals have increased their assets by 60 per cent, Birlas 40 per cent, ACC have become fatter by 35 per cent, Bangurs by 33 per cent and Srirams by 30 per cent. Birlas who have been chasing Tatas for quite a long time are now bang equal to them. Among others, now the race is between Martin Burn and Mafatlals who had hitherto been the seventh. ACC are shooting up and nearly reaching Bangurs. Thapars and Surajmals are falling back. Srirams, the new babe, have also crossed the prestige figure—Rs. 100 crores worth of assets.

No comment is necessary on the phenomenon. One small note may however be in order. It was a fact, Mr Reddy admitted in the face of overwhelming figures, that the monopoly houses had become fatter—it was necessary for the growth of the economy. The Government was however trying to diffuse economic power through a painless revolution: through selective nationalisation, selective acquisition of strategic shareholdings, dilution of equity, and

adding convertibility clauses to loans given by public financial institutions. On the same day, Mr Tata assured his shareholder friends that the Government had agreed not to effect conversion rights and not to convert the loans made to TISCO into equity.

This was the dialectical process

which Mr Reddy mentioned in the Rajya Sabha. Mr Bhupesh Gupta who thought that the word was his monopoly interjected and said that it was diabolical. Mr Gupta should have known better. Mr Reddy was a practitioner in subjective dialectics, to which by now we hope Mr Gupta is not a stranger.

and devaluation were all part of the price extracted from India.

The fanfare with which the end of PL-480 foodgrain imports to India is greeted sounds a cruel joke on the masses now because thinking in the government has shifted in favour of securing resumption of U.S. aid. The lobby which has been pleading for better India-U.S. relations is growing strong. After all, the Indo-Soviet treaty, now a year old, might have helped the ruling classes in many ways but cannot pull them out of the economic crisis.

A certain nervousness is visible in the higher echelons. Marathon sessions are held to discuss the implications of the drought and the price rise. The situation is serious, but not alarming, newspapermen are told by official spokesmen. But all this can scarcely conceal the panic in the political leadership which has overdone all its gimmicks and knows no way out. It was all right for the bureaucrats to say that the 14-day war did not cost the nation anything and that the country could afford the permissible luxury of occasional wars on the revenue budget. But the economy was "war-heated" the whole of last year and the deficit financing runs to Rs 900 crores when Rs 450 crores or so was considered the safe limit. It was reckless spending last year, all for the dubious honour or being acknowledged the liberator of Bangladesh. The military budget cannot be cut back though the Prime Minister is convinced of Mr Bhutto's bona fides about durable peace.

Mr C. Subramaniam is the convenor of an action group of six economic ministers which excludes the Big Two who no longer merit the Prime Minister's favour (Mr Jagjivan Ram and Mr Chavan). The action group comprises largely political lightweights and is ostensibly active breaking the bottlenecks to industrial growth. The Moscow lobby has been gunning for this group though it comprises passionate friends of the Soviet Union. The implications of the campaign against the group are not clear. Mr D. P. Dhar was in it

View from Delhi

Drift To Disaster

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JUST one bad crop year has proved enough to turn the leadership nervous and jittery because it has shown up the vulnerability of the economy. The leadership had settled for the comfort of a low growth rate. Ever since Mrs Indira Gandhi took over, the rate of industrial growth went hurtling down the inclined plane, from about seven per cent to a measly one. If Gen. Ne Win could claim socialism for his people with a zero per cent growth rate, we should regard ourselves lucky because our rate is zero plus.

Five successive good harvest years covered up the weaknesses on the industrial front. But this year the bluff of growth with stability and growth with social justice would be called, with an anticipated shortfall of 27 million tonnes (and a buffer stock of 9.5 million tonnes claimed) due to the drought. But the drought would provide a perfect alibi for failure on the garibi hatyao front because the talk of war on drought and war on the price rise provides necessary diversion, if only for the time being.

The complacency among the ministers and the bureaucrats should indeed impress the World Bank whose report on India's achievements last year should make flattering reading in the ponderous government offices. The report has commended India's economic performance in a particularly difficult situation. It noted the

continuing satisfactory growth in agriculture and the buoyancy of exports. It also noted the slow growth rate in industrial production and mentioned the problems besetting individual industries. The report on the whole was impressed by the Indian concern for combining economic growth with social justice.

In the context of the report, the Aid India consortium has considered it necessary to prevent a sharp decline in the transfer of resources to India and agreed with the World Bank's assessment that fresh aid commitments to the extent of 1,250 million dollars (700 million of non-project assistance and 550 million of project assistance) would be needed to prevent this decline.

So after all the claims of going it without aid, the thinking has returned to the ability of the Aid India consortium to pull the economy through. Back in 1965, the late Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri said much the same things and there was an elaborate exercise in self-reliance based on import substitution. But one of the first major acts of Mrs Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister was to go to Washington to get U.S. food aid agreement formalised and economic aid resumed. The price can be measured in terms of the distortion of India's policies and priorities. A belligerent anti-China stance, tacit silence on escalation of the Vietnam war, liberalisation of fertiliser policy

to begin with but seems to be cheating off. Though the Prime Minister seems to have blessed the group in the initial stages she seems to be a little annoyed that the group is over-doing things in her name. The emergence of this group has been compared to the old kitchen cabinet of

the 1967 days. The need for a group like this when there are already two high-powered economic policy and co-ordination panels of the Cabinet and members of the group control majorities in both these panels is being questioned.

recognized by the body social, any possible electoral verdict against the ruling power-establishment cannot be countenanced by it and needs must be thwarted by any means, and the electoral trend reversed or diverted, or if such is not attainable in time, the election-results rigged.

Centre Confronts W. Bengal

R. P. MULLICK

BEHIND the claim of the ruling class that West Bengal has been permanently "captured" from the united front of leftists there lurks an uneasy fear about the masses. This uneasiness is reflected in the series of attacks on workers and cadres in left-oriented industrial, mining and plantation centres as well as in agricultural areas. It is also reflected in the hectic efforts to control as many of the key centres of bureaucratic control over the administration as are considered necessary for maintaining an iron grip on the avenues of recruitment, personnel management, posting and promotions, and the distribution of licences, permits, credit and other facilities, to lure and keep a hold on individual and community interests. The slightest growth of agitational, far less militant, struggle in industrial or agricultural areas is met with immediate punitive response and squashed. The strategy is that of undisputed, Centrally dominated totalitarian control over every facet of political life in West Bengal. Their tactics, clear by now, are: submerge the mass and class organs of economic and political struggle under waves of preventive detention, arrests, search-warrants, and above all by murderous raids on trade unions, peasant organisations and left-oriented organs, the intelligentsia, even on particular individuals; utilise the administrative machinery to bear upon public opinion through a gigantic demonstration of State power (route marches by the Army and para-mili-

tary units, and their posting at all vantage points of public gathering, even where they are least called for); and subtle interference in public life through mass propaganda (All India Radio, big-money newspapers, and hired agencies for the systematic posting and wall-painting of pro-establishment slogans); drive out left-inspired volunteers from suitable public places, even obliterating their wall communiques, create an army of "mastans" (roughneck bullies) drawn from the anti-social fringe elements of the lumpen proletariat as well as from the rural sections of decadent middle-class "intelligentsia" of political illiterates, encourage them to be aggressive towards left-party cadres and workers, thereby giving a false impression among the uninformed as though the ruling party is gaining in popularity. Also draw upon left ideology, distorting the call of the repressed have-nots for struggle, and lead them towards social conservatism, economic anarchy and political confusion—in short towards counter-revolution.

Will the ruling party be able to stay in power for the coming five years? The answer is that, so long as the relationship of class forces is lopsidedly in favour of the present establishment of power, any effort by exploited people to oppose it effectively will be unavailing. The ruling class will not allow any progressive opposition to articulate itself, far less to win any election. Since elections are a formalized procedure sanctified by the constitution and

'Resistance'

One must remember the methods employed long before the elections in March 1972: the organisation of 'people's resistance groups' through officers in-charge of almost all police thanas. Propaganda began for winning 'people's support' and for hiding its Government-sponsored character by professing resistance against Naxalites, and the anti-socials (so long propped up by the Government as showboy 'Naxals', to provoke genuine leftists and create an atmosphere of uncertainty and anarchy strong enough to antagonize sizable sections of the public against the real Naxalites). Although the Government claimed that the law and order situation was under control, and the Naxalite party was on the verge of disintegration and eclipse, these extra-departmental procedures were adopted by agencies under the aegis of the Government itself. The fond expectation was that their inherent contradiction would be missed by the public or at least glossed over by a major section. By and large this expectation was fulfilled. Acute fear psychosis dulled the sensitivity towards repression and the Government's tyrannical interference in corporate civil life. Few mass struggles on the scale and magnitude of the 1959 and 1966 agitations and food riots, or on the model of people's resistance campaigns against bureaucratic fiats (as in 1952 and 1953) were conceived or led by the United Front of left parties. Although the CPM read the historic warning in the murder-arrest-annihilation tactics of its class-enemy, and although its own party journals were full of factual details of such tactics, yet by a strange inversion of political reasoning it concluded that it would be

possible and feasible to participate in the elections and even succeed in getting elected.

Unfortunately political illusions of this type have taken a heavy toll of leftist energy and cadre strength. However, it has helped to shatter these very illusions and in understanding the actual strength, subterfuge and power of counter-revolutionary forces.

It has often been suggested that the leftists inducted the politics of murder into West Bengal. Since the murdered do not come back to life to identify the murderers and since the acute condition of fear which has gripped the public in West Bengal since late 1970 when pre-arranged murders of suspected ultra-left youths began under government auspices by mercenaries and plainclothes intelligence sleuths, none are available to identify the actual culprit. Crime is seldom punished, far less detected, in West Bengal today. What was the total number of the dead in the 1969-72 period when charges and counter-charges between leftists and rightists as well as between leftists and pseudo-leftists were rampant? The State agencies of information have not released any dependable figure as yet.* But culled from private sources, this total fluctuates between 6,000 and 11,000. Another fact is that, virtually 90% of the total dead is shared by the CPM and the CP (ML), nearly equally.

* Speaking on April 28, 1972, West Bengal's Minister of State for Home told the Assembly that the total number of murders committed in West Bengal was 2415 during the 15-month period from December 20, 1970 to March 20, 1972, including 1,169 political murders. This appears an obvious understatement, in view of the minister's later statement, conceding that 244 murders have been committed after the Congress ministry's assumption of power, i.e. within a brief three-month spell ending June 26, 1972—a period when the law and order situation was claimed to have vastly improved.

Of the rest, nearly 8% will make up the aggregate loss suffered by left parties other than these two, viz. the Forward Bloc, SUC, RSP, etc. The ruling party does not appear to have intimated to either the press or to any public organ what the number of its total dead is. It is the general impression that this would not be more than 2% of the gross total. In any case, the heavy loss of cadres, supporters and sympathisers suffered by the CPM and the CP (ML) point to the fact that they were the marked-out targets of the proprietor-managerial class. How is it that the initiators of the political cult of individual murders are themselves the worst sufferers? Could it not be the truth then, that they were hustled along the steep and abysmal descent of mutual annihilation by their traducers, the common class-enemy? It is indeed by this sophisticated method that the ruling class manages to retain the strings of power as well as the moral-ideological *raison d'être*. True, this method involves a paradox since it introduces a period of political disorder verging on anarchy in the initial stages. But such anarchy suits the purpose and ultimate objective of the rulers for this is the only way of removing the mass bases of people's struggle (against class enemies, against repression, against exploitation) conducted by left parties committed to social revolution, but which for the time being at least they must conduct in the open, for obvious reasons.

On the other hand, the elements that are committed to the immediate launching of armed struggle, much too impetuously, can also be decimated, group by group, individual after individual by the very forces of class coercion whom they were resolved to destroy. The very impromptu nature of uncoordinated, decentralized struggle for liberation, appearing when the time is not ripe, creates a situation in which the police find their victims in painful isolation from the people, bereft of any base-protection.

Regarding the tactics of muzzling

the opposition, the number of detentions without trial gives the lie to the propaganda that with the Congress back in power, normal conditions have returned and people are feeling secure. In September 1971, there was a total of 4,532 detainees under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act. Towards the end of June 1972, three months after the Congress (R) had re-introduced the blessings of its brand of "durable peace", this number was still 4,336 with the added laurel of the Government that there were 5,271 applications still pending from all categories of detainees for proper review by the advisory board. Meanwhile 21 persons had died (during 1971, on the Government's admission) in detention, and about 70 killed by the security staff in various jails during incidents—so easy to provoke under incredibly inhuman conditions of overcrowding, insanitation, sub-standard diet and fettered confinement in solitary cells—and many more made to suffer immeasurable privation and ignominy (including transfers to jails far away from West Bengal, eg. Cuddalore), so that ultimately their morale would break down and the way paved for the eventual assimilation of the defectors among them into the Congress fold.

It was part of the Congress strategy to get an infusion of new blood by drafting part of the Naxalite rank-and-file cadres. Their policymakers had hoped to wear down the ultra-left ideological commitment of the youthful and not-so-mature cadres under unbearable strains of physical discomfort and torture, beguile them with false assurances of personal security, (income-opportunities and a seemingly super-chance of infiltrating the Youth Congress organisational cells, and initiate a specious process of "negotiation" with un-named Naxalite leaders for arranging some sort of general reprieve for the party members and supporters. They had also tried to imbue them with the illusory intoxication of fighting the "neo-revisionist CPM" on a higher plane of left radicalism. The very wording, tone and temper of the slo-

gans and the political approach of the Youth Congress and the allied students' organisation (Chhatra Parishad) towards the uncommitted public, prove the methodical nature of the Centre's plan to confront West Bengal's revolutionary socialism with counterfeit coins, by a maladroit combination of hightone propaganda while carrying out a programme of annihilating genuine Naxalites and mass-based workers.

Nemesis

It did not strike the Centre's arch strategists that every counter-revolutionary move has consequences that can very well be termed its own nemesis. The Congress in West Bengal today is riven with dissensions which New Delhi had not bargained for. The erstwhile Youth Congress chief is now at daggers drawn with his former friend and political bed-fellow—now a minister in the West Bengal Cabinet. Criss-cross and bizarre patterns of clique-rivalries, intra-Cabinet rifts have already begun plaguing the ruling class lobbies. The West Bengal PCC had been summarily reformed more than once in the past by planting ad-hoc bodies. Even with the ouster of the Congress (original) from power, the new Congress is not free from backyard hamstringing attempts by previous proteges of New Delhi to topple the topplers. The new leaders are comparatively immature, inexperienced, and are burdened with the hangover of an intemperate penchant to prove that all power grows out of the barrel of a gun—although their gun is a borrowed one, from the Centrally controlled intelligence and police chiefs. As a result the Centre now faces the legacy of its earlier modus operandi and the Congress has been loaded with anti-socials, time-servers, unscrupulous opportunists, hothead egotists who are out to settle old scores of group feuds and personal quarrels on the higher plane of provincial politics of the ruling party and, what is worse, with the direct or indirect help of local law and order chiefs. Mr Chandrajeet Yadav, Ge-

neral Secretary of the AICC, must have seen the list of anti-social criminals sheltering under the protective wings of the new General Secretary of the West Bengal Committee. He must have been told of the factual details which the West Bengal Inspector General of Police possesses, and which he has reported in confidence to one West Bengal minister belonging to the minority community. Mr Uma Shankar Dikshit, the Centre's deputised representative, has recently been to West Bengal to inquire specifically about the extent and intensity of intra-party schism and feuds. Both of them are now looking for unscrupulous coterie—even from the previous ad-hocites—to collude with.

The drought has played havoc with paddy, jute, and even the production of kitchen vegetables. Starvation deaths, however much denied, have spilled into local language periodicals, one of which has published a list of the dead with their addresses. The scourge of unemployment has increased, not decreased with the installation of the Congress, which fought the recent election on the promise of finding employment for the jobless. And, now the planners and economic policy-makers of the West Bengal Cabinet and the PCC have changed their tone and begun talking of finding investment resources for new industrial business ventures, forgetting their tall promises of yesterday—bringing the private sector under joint managerial control, of theirs as well as of the public, booming upsurge of capital investment in new ventures, increased production and production efficiency (highlighted, alas, by the continuing sickness of more than 200 units that have stopped operation), compelling the province's big-business tycoons to reorient their recruitment policy in favour of sons of the soil, completing the Farakka barrage scheme, and above all, the grandiose dream-assurance by the Chief Minister of energising 2,000 villages every month.

The new upstarts of the new Con-

gress are poaching into the trade union sphere by strong-arm tactics. It suits the vested interests of big business to utilize them to sow confusion and chaos among organised labour. But even the West Bengal unit of the INTUC is embarrassed, not to speak of the harassed CPI allies of the ruling party. The trade unions created by youth leaders on the strength of bombs and pipe-guns exist by duplicating, even by triplicating, labour cells of the party in the same unit, and are being retained artificially to enable the leaders to reap the ancillary benefits of labour leadership. The future is dark with shadows of bloody in-fighting between fraternal working class organs. The killing of miners in the Chinakuri Treepit Colliery (July 26), the demand for a judicial inquiry into the genesis of which was turned down in the Lok Sabha, has evoked Mr Dadhu Danvate, MP, to issue a warning to the rulers against their "encouraging the use of bullets instead of ballot-box in the trade-union movement".

Though the number of its readers continues to be encouraging, **Frontier** is having a bad time, financially, for obvious reasons.

To meet part of the deficit its price is being raised, from this week to :

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Business Manager
FRONTIER

SEPTEMBER 2, 1972

Gurus On Warpath

N. K. SINGH

SELDOM has Delhi University been so rocked by controversy as over the Delhi University Amendment Bill introduced in the Rajya Sabha on August 4. The Bill had already been promulgated through a Presidential ordinance on June 22, when most of the teachers were away on holiday. As soon as the University opened after the summer vacation, the teachers launched their struggle against this "undemocratic" manoeuvre of the Government.

Their first agitational step was to stage a massive demonstration before the Vice-Chancellor on August 1, wherein copies of the controversial Bill were burnt. Next day there was a token strike on the campus and the students, too, boycotted the classes in sympathy with their gurus' demands. Needless to say, it was completely successful. On August 8, some 2,000 teachers held a peaceful rally near Parliament House; it was for the first time in the half-century-old history of the University that the teaching community had carried their agitation to the doors of Parliament. It was also the first time that so many teachers had gathered under one banner—the Delhi University Teachers Association.

All the main Opposition parties—Swatantra, Jana Sangh, CPI, CPM, SSP and Congress (O)—and their youth and student wings—have extended their support to the teachers' struggle. Even the Congress-controlled Delhi University National Students Union has pledged its support.

In this background, the remarks of the Union Education Minister, Mr Nurul Hassan, who described the agitation as "unseemly", and of an 'eminent' educationist, Mr V. V. John, who saw in it a "departure from the elegances of academic decorum" by "an agitated crowd" can be described only as an outburst of feudal frenzy.

The teachers' agitation now revolves round four immediate demands: scrapping of the College Council; takeover of all colleges by the University; statutory security of service to be ensured by amending the Delhi University Act; effective teachers' representation on the Executive Council, Academic Council and the Court. They have threatened to go on an indefinite strike if their demands are not conceded.

To understand what it is all about, one has to understand the sociological problem of abnormal growth that the University faces today. From a few hundred students in 1922 it has now to cope with 90,000 students and 35,000 teachers. Hence, it cannot be disputed that the University authorities have a genuine administrative problem—to tackle which various ideas have been floated during the last five years.

In the days of Mr C. D. Deshmukh, the idea of a new university for Delhi area was floated. In the subsequent years, during the tenure of Dr B. N. Ganguli, one heard of a proposal for junior colleges for the Pass course and senior colleges for Honours teaching. During the tenure of Dr K. N. Raj one heard of two proposals—set up two Central universities or have one Central University and a State University run by the Delhi Administration. For some time during the past year the idea of two Central universities was again making the rounds, only to be turned down by the Centre.

The present Vice-Chancellor, Dr Sarup Singh, impressed on the Minister of Education the need for early reforms. However, he had only three choices: to ask for another university in Delhi; establish the south campus with full fledged departments; form college or zonal councils. The first two were rejected by the Government and the Univer-

sity Grants Commission. So, only the last one was open.

Last January the Union Education Minister appointed a committee consisting of one representative from the Ministry and one from the UGC, besides Dr Singh, to examine the proposal. It recommended establishment of college councils which implied that undergraduate studies would be the responsibility of colleges and post-graduate studies, of the university departments.

Around this time the teachers became apprehensive. Fears about delinking of the post-graduate studies were expressed. The Vice-Chancellor then appointed a committee—popularly called 'mini parliament'—of 32 to suggest steps to reorganise the University. After two months of deliberations the 'mini parliament' came to the conclusion that the federal character of the university should be maintained and strengthened. It recommended the establishment of a council of central administration which would take care of most of the academic and administrative problems. It would discharge many functions normally performed by the Academic and the Executive Councils and act as a buffer between the lower unit and the Vice-Chancellor. It also recommended that all colleges be taken over so as to give a centralised structure with decentralised functioning. Management of colleges should be mostly by teachers and there should be effective representation of teachers on the Executive, Academic and other councils. The emphasis was on allowing the colleges to develop specialised courses. Some, it was suggested, should start post-graduate departments. This implied that the colleges would have readers and professors and they could be involved in undergraduate teaching.

But these findings did not tally with those of the UGC committee. The report was suppressed till the announcement of the Presidential ordinance giving statute-making authority to the University's Executive Council, providing for setting

up of one or more college councils and declaring professional colleges autonomous.

Sharp Reaction

Reaction to the move was sharp. The way the measure was rushed through—in less than ten days three meetings of the Executive Council were held and the Academic Council meeting was summoned at eight hours' notice—also caused resentment notwithstanding the Vice-Chancellor's assurances.

Of all the 'reforms', the introduction of college councils (three have already been set up) forms the main core of the teachers' forebodings.

In simple terms, the college councils are just an administrative arrangement—meant to look after a certain number of colleges and handle their problems. They will deal only with undergraduate studies. Certain administrative and academic functions of the Academic Council and the Executive Council will also be delegated to them.

The teachers fear that the statute is like an iceberg which conceals more than it reveals. They think that over a period of time the cluster of colleges under the college councils will grow into undergraduate universities. As the Delhi University Teachers Association memorandum recently submitted to the Prime Minister stated, the provision would lead to separation of "undergraduate education from post-graduate, thereby destroying the federal character of Delhi University". A principal of a Delhi University college revealed that the authorities were increasing the number of university-appointed teachers in post-graduate departments. For instance, in the English Department, three professors and eight readers had been appointed. With so many teachers in the post-graduate department, college lecturers would hardly get any chance to take M.A. classes. The statute regarding the college councils makes no provision for college teachers to take post-graduate classes. If this was not "defederalisa-

tion" of Delhi University, what else was?

This, according to the teachers, poses further dangers to their security of service and involves loss of status as a university teacher with its implications for the salary scale and other benefits.

Further, the college councils, in their composition, are thoroughly undemocratic. Apart from the chairman appointed by the University, they will each consist of five principals to be nominated by rotation, two professors to be nominated by the Academic Council, four "educationists"—two to be selected by the Visitor and two by the Executive Council—and five teachers who also will be selected by rotation.

It is also feared that the provision of autonomy for professional colleges might in due course be applied to other institutions. Service conditions and rules of appointment might altogether be different from what they are today.

Another distressing aspect of the ordinance is de-gradation of the University Court from a supreme decision-making body to a mere deliberative body. All powers would be vested in the Executive Council which, paradoxically, does not have a single teachers' representative. Practically all the members of the Executive Council owe their existence to the Vice-Chancellor. What it boils down to is that the Vice-Chancellor would have absolute power to govern the University or to make any structural changes therein.

And hence, despite the assurance of the Education Minister that the Government of India "does not have under its consideration any proposal to delink the colleges from the university" the struggle continues.

Progressive Mask

The current agitation has also laid bare the progressive mask of Dr Sarup Singh—one of the founder members of the Delhi University Teachers Association. At first he tried to show as if he would risk his career for the sake of teachers and

declared that "as one who has taught in Delhi University for over 30 years, I would wish to solve the problem of the university through direct consultation with my colleagues". Some of the wiser correspondents of the local 'leftist' Press tried to read between the lines of this statement and saw a clear confrontation emerging between a democratic Vice-Chancellor and a conservative Education Minister. But within ten days the cat was out of the bag. Dr Singh held an 'exclusive' meeting with some of the "senior" teachers and, with their assistance, formed an "informal committee", to persuade the DUTA to give up its demand of scrapping the college councils!

But a peep into past history would reveal that Dr Singh is an old follower of the divide and rule policy. The first step he took after assuming office was to give important assignments to three of the college teachers who were known to be writing regularly in the newspapers. Thereafter, these gentlemen projected the official point of view. And since the formation of the college councils they have been appointed principals. In another case, two prominent DUTA leaders were appointed professors—though one of them had been twice rejected for the readership in two years and the other too had been rejected earlier.

In such a background, the letter of a DUTA conthusiast, published in a New Delhi newspaper, is, to say the least, amusing: "Demonstrations, token strikes. What more is necessary before the authorities can understand that the ordinance issued for the benefit of Delhi University teachers has been rejected by almost everyone? Or do we have to resort to violence to get the idea across?"

NOTICE

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Business Manager
Frontier

SEPTEMBER 2, 1972

An Appeal To The World

ROHANA WIJEWEERA

IT is well known to the world that the ruling capitalist class of Sri Lanka, in association with the reactionary forces of foreign imperialism, has temporarily repressed the Ceylon proletariat and its political organisation, the Lanka Janata Vimukti Peramuna (People's Liberation Front of Ceylon), by cruel, violent and counter-revolutionary action, in order to protect its exploitative system, maintain its class privileges, and prevent its class rule from being overthrown.

Since March 1971 the bourgeois counter-revolution in Ceylon has achieved a temporary and unstable military victory only by committing, on a widespread scale and in a manner that appears incredible, the most barbarous, despicable and inhuman atrocities which constitute the worst terror in our history.

At this moment, when the reactionary and corrupt capitalist ruling clique—with the generous assistance and support as well as the blessings of reactionary foreign imperialist powers of various kinds, with the murderous Yankee imperialists at their head—has cruelly repressed the Ceylon proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard, the People's Liberation Front, and caused it to retreat, we as true Marxist-Leninists, in accordance with the supreme principles of proletarian internationalism, seek your moral and material support and solidarity.

Peoples of all lands!

We appeal to you

(1) To compel the murderous fascist and dictatorial government of Sirima Bandaranaike, sheltering behind a democratic mask, to repeal immediately and completely the so-called Public Security Act which it has brought into force;

(2) To compel it to lift immediately the ban imposed under the emergency regulations, on the People's Liberation Front, the vanguard of the Ceylon proletariat, and to remove the repressive measures against the revolutionary movement;

(3) To help in revealing the manner in which the reactionary ruling clique which has taken on the character of a "constitutional dictatorship" has used the corrupt and pro-imperialist police force and sections of the armed services, private terrorist gangs, foreign pilots and aircraft, as well as CIA advice and methods, to massacre in the very country they were ruling the very people who placed them in power, destroying whole villages, demolishing and burning houses, raping women, wiping out whole families, murdering more than 15,000 revolutionary young men and women and more than twice that number of innocent people—actions that it carried out and is still carrying out in order to repress the revolutionary movement;

To reveal the facts about these barbarous actions that have been concealed and that will shock and appal the whole world;

(4) To help in exposing and defeating the insane policies, destructive and treacherous to the people, pursued by this "fascist-democratic" ruling clique, which keeps about ten thousand patriotic young men and women imprisoned in inhuman conditions under cover of "rehabilitation"; to compel them to release all those against whom there are no charges, to inform all those against whom there are supposed charges, of their nature, and to afford them immediate access to lawyers;

(5) To compel them to repeal the arbitrary, inhuman and savage Criminal Justice Commissions Act, to

hold trials of political prisoners under the ordinary law earlier in force, and to halt immediately the political repression at present maintained under that Act;

(6) To help in revealing the objective reality in opposition to the unprincipled and foul lies, distortions, insults and slanders directed against the Ceylon proletarian movement and its political core, the People's Liberation Front, its principles, policies and programme, and its activists;

(7) We seek finally your moral and material support, your endorsement and solidarity, in every form, every manner and every means, to tear off the "socialist" and "democratic" masks of the reactionary capitalist ruling Sirima Bandaranaike clique, to expose to the whole world its fascist-capitalist nakedness, to protect in retreat the People's Liberation Front, the striking force of the Ceylon proletariat; to protect the purity and universality of Marxist-Leninist thought, and the sacred right of oppressed humanity to revolt against cruel and arbitrary rulers; to protect the revolutionary honour of more than 15,000 revolutionary young men and women, members of the People's Liberation Front, who sacrificed their lives; to protect the human and social rights of millions of Ceylon proletarians, and to carry forward the Ceylon socialist proletarian revolution to victory.

Wherever You Are

Wherever you may be in the world, if you are a Marxist-Leninist, if you are a revolutionary, if you are a communist, if you are a socialist, if you are a progressive, if you are a democrat, if you are a humanitarian, if you are an upholder of justice, we seek your co-operation.

On behalf of more than 15,000 Marxist-Leninist young men and women who found no burial place, who were burnt alive, who had to die seeing their sisters, wives and mothers raped before their eyes, who were buried alive, who sacrificed their lives on the battlefield, who

embraced death in going forward against the enemy knowing they were doomed to die, who did not have the fortune of having their funeral dirges sung by the millions of proletarians whom they served; on behalf of the tens of thousands of revolutionaries who lost their homes, wives and children, brothers and sisters, who were imprisoned, who were crippled and maimed; on behalf of the youth of this country who cannot hope to emerge from the darkness and cruel slavery of the monstrous bourgeois dictatorship into the light of liberation without a revolutionary uprising, without a rebuilding of the People's Liberation Front, without the forward movement of the proletariat; on behalf of the proletariat of Ceylon, defenceless before the rising economic, political, social and military oppression of the bourgeoisie, we appeal to you to fulfil your international proletarian and human duties.

From dark prisons we raise the cry, high, powerful and sacred—"Let proletarian internationalism triumph!"

In a land without justice, where both men and rights, justice and fairness, have been burnt at the altar of the vicious purposes of the capitalist ruling clique, we extend in comradeship our hands, bound by the chains of the bourgeoisie, emaciated yet strong.

Before the supreme tribunal of the conscience of mankind we appeal against the savage repression of the capitalist ruling clique of Ceylon. Peoples of the world! It is from you we expect justice and right.

"If tens of thousands advance to take up the tasks that fall from us,

If the hands of the people are lifted to raise the red banners that drop from our hands,

If there are voices to sing their grief on our way to the grave,
Then wherever Death may find me
—to welcome him I am ready."

(Rohana Wijeweera is the leader of the JPV and is now undergoing trial in Colombo).

Indian Intelligentsia

RANJAN K. BANERJEE

THE Indian intelligentsia is a diversified body with a rich intellectual tradition. The spectrum of its political opinion ranges from moderate, national liberalism to a totalistic revolutionary creed. But, for all its opinionative diversity, it shares certain common beliefs—belief in the emancipation of the individual, belief in history as a meaningful process, and the belief that it is the intellectuals who are destined to point the way towards a general liberation of society. In short, freedom is conceived as the goal, history as the force impelling us towards it, and the intelligentsia as the instrument.

But who are these men who regard themselves as the vanguard of the forces of freedom? Ironically, they are the Indian professional men, selling their services, whether those of a journalist, or doctor, or lawyer or teacher on a market with which the government can interfere proscriptively and which it can regulate and direct. This situation permits them to acquire a broad background and to perform a variety of public services. They have reason enough to feel contentment when they have criticized the government from the pages of the privately-owned newspapers and journals. But they remain essentially dependent on the State. The State is their only employer. And as salaried employees of the State they have little opportunities of serving society. The situation, therefore, prevents them from developing that sense of civic responsibility and involvement which can derive only from active participation in political affairs.

Insecure in their position and dependent on the State for benefits and privileges, the Indian intelligentsia always prefer to concentrate their attention on immediate social and economic gains. And they concede the conduct of national politics to the autocratic government. The

Indian intellectuals had been at the helm of affairs so long the struggle for political and civil liberty was the function not of social or economic interest, but of education and culture. But since the struggle has assumed its social and economic purposefulness, producing a dynamism, a single-minded drive towards a pre-set goal for which it seemed difficult to find a historic parallel, they have evinced a tragic lack of social initiative on the one hand, and on the other, deplorable inability to weather many serious socio-economic challenges. They regard themselves as the vanguard of the liberating forces but are mere reactionaries in the sense that they have found it easier to seek refuge in the old and established pattern and to find escape in the not-so-knowledgeable contemplation of the *Benedictus* or of what the censors have done to the latest *Kurosawa* than to assume an active role in directing national life, keeping in mind the long-term political implications of each move, and to shape the character of Indian statehood. In other words, they are reactionaries in the sense that they have refused to be committed, socially and politically.

It is under the pretext of remaining a free agent that the Indian intelligentsia have refused to be committed. But in reality they are a servitor class, in no way outside the prevailing service structure. Nevertheless, they have wanted to be considered as a class apart, emphasizing a division between mental and physical labour, and suggesting the need of a complete subordination of the peasants to the gentry. They have, however, compromised by including in this privileged class not only the intellectuals but also two other groups, the professional personnel and the rest of the bureaucracy, civil as well as military. This has given the intelligentsia an almost paradoxical position in the society. On the one hand, it is attached to the State service class par excellence; on the other, it has lost its social identity.

The situation of the 'intellectual'

writers is somewhat different. They call themselves 'liberal writers' who want to be outside the great political or social conflicts of their time. Some of them, however, labelling themselves progressive, seem perfectly prepared to acknowledge their loyalty to communism but their outlook in every essential respect contradicts that espoused by communism. If they exalt freedom, it is the freedom of aristocratic spirit; if they defend anything, it is orthodoxy and autocracy. But the more clever among them assert the writer's right to an apolitical existence, trying to maintain a most annoying neutrality in the struggle between communism and capitalism. However, they are the most inclined to translate their spontaneous reaction to something they approve of into 'political prognostications almost always in favour of the bourgeoisie but for whose patronage they could not have been where they are.

Those among the intelligentsia who, calling themselves progressive, seem to show some political awareness and involvement in the country's political life, are naturally more likely to be taken seriously, especially by the younger generation. But they have to be most guarded against. Their apparent political involvement should not be mistaken for a genuine commitment to politics as such. If they are involved in politics, it is not because they have a conviction of their own, but because the involvement will, they feel, get them a wider audience and because the system under which they live is getting increasingly inclined to interpret human activity in terms of politics. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the whole attitude behind the pronounced political sentiments of the Indian intelligentsia is mainly anti-political which so well manifests itself not only in the vast literary output of the country but also in the attitude of the intelligentsia towards history that has been used to justify the hardships and deprivations imposed on the suf-

fering millions for the sake of a nebulous future.

Elitism

The contemporary intellectual's part in discrediting history, therefore, is not insignificant. History has been perverted. It has been turned into official dogma. It has been often presented in the form of romantic nostalgia for the past, but seldom as the dynamic motor force (Toynbee is hardly an exception) of human evolution, for then it would have been difficult to give the lie to the contributions of the peasants and the proletariat to the progress of civilization. If the apparent political involvement of the Indian intelligentsia were a genuine commitment, they would have wanted to be free from the tyranny of the ossified history and would have tried to read it as the record of the evolution of the dark and suffering masses of humanity. Instead, they have cultivated a cultural elitism that has alienated them from the dark masses.

Therefore, the occasional rebellion of the contemporary Indian intellectual against the accepted social and economic order springs from his alienation and not from any very definite political conviction or from any belief in progress. He rebels against a social and economic order which chokes him. But he nevertheless remains, and possibly even loves to do so, the chosen instrument of those very forces which have a thwarting influence on him. The roots of his dissatisfaction go back to his personal frustration and have little to do with the contemporary major human problems.

What the Indian intelligentsia most need today is a fuller awareness of the widespread national paralysis caused by the utter dependence of all social groups and classes on the government. It certainly militates against the emergence in society of significant liberal forces. Liberty is still only an idea. It is upheld only when the ideal of freedom fuses in the consciousness of the men in power with the action of their

self-interest. The positive aim of the Indian intelligentsia should be to realize a necessary and sufficient precondition of freedom as a fact. And this they can achieve only by asserting their right to unhindered perception of reality and to react to this reality in complete emotional freedom. So long we do not lose sight of the truth that the establishment of freedom is intrinsically connected with certain definite political and legal institutions, what this reality is does not seem difficult to guess.

The Inner Eye

K. R.

IT is disconcerting to contemplate that one may not even know when Satyajit Ray's documentary on Benode Behary Mukherjee, *The Inner Eye*, will be released for public viewing. As a Films Division short it may be tagged along a feature one would not care or bother to see. However, it would be mean because of that not to praise the Films Division for its contribution to the making of this unique film on a unique artist.

Considering the present publicity-cum-career-management art world circuit of our country it is perhaps not surprising that Benode Behary Mukherjee, the greatest mural painter India has seen for a long time, is

"It is very much contemporary in essence."—*Frontier*.

● এ্যাকাডেমী নঞ্ পূর্ব্বজ ●

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practically unknown beyond a limited circle of students and art lovers. Even those who have managed to appoint themselves as judges of paintings and art historians give the impression of never having heard of him. In a 340-page Bengali book on Indian painting Benode Behary does not get even a passing mention. It is to Indian cinema's lasting credit that it has recorded in twenty minutes of glorious cinema an appreciation and a tribute to this remarkable man and his remarkable art.

In *The Inner Eye* Satyajit Ray has focused his attention primarily on the artist, the human being, and through him has revealed and interpreted his art. In the case of most creative people the two are perhaps inseparable. It is specially so in Benode Behary's case.

The physical disability of a poor eyesight at birth, which progressively worsened until he became blind in his fifty-third year, has been a major factor in his development as a painter. In all his work the primary concern can be seen to be a singular search for the basic pictorial language, the essence of form as it were, of the objects painted. It is as if the limited resource of the eyes is conserved to be spent on the essential, the basic. Only then is the picture allowed to grow. The vivid visualisation and the visceral quality that we find in the complete pictures are a result, not so much of the light waves that strike the retina, as of the sight of the inner eye. By an amazing quality of imagination Benode Behary seems to have turned the very handicap into an asset. I do not know of any other major painter who has painted with gravely impaired eyesight and, later, with no eyesight at all.

The centre of focus in *The Inner Eye*, therefore, is the artist, the human being. The film begins with the blind painter working on an enormous panel design on tiles. With his fingers he "looks" at the shape, texture, and maybe, colour of the tiles, sorts them out and fixes their posi-

tions. We are cut back from there to follow, in a few rapid sequences made out of stills and old film strips, his training under Nandalal Bose and his early interest in calligraphy. We are then swiftly transported, helped along by the informative commentary, the smooth editing and a dynamic frame, to the world of Benode Behary's art.

But even as we enter and move along the broad avenues of that world—a beautiful world of calligraphic painting, landscapes, screen and scroll painting, murals, etchings, lithographs, paper and textile collages—we are all the time reminded of its creator. We see him moving about in his room, taking his cup of raw tea, arranging his drawing materials, actually drawing with swift, sure strokes. Even when he is not there in the frame we feel his presence.

The murals are, of course, the high watermark of Benode Behary's paintings. The magnum opus in the Hindi Bhavan at Santiniketan, based on the lives of medieval saints, is actually a gigantic portrait of a whole society in movement, a stupendous human pageant. Unhurriedly and yet with the minimum number of takes, the camera reveals in image after changing image the size, the conceptual subtlety, the range and depth of this work, described by K. G. Subramanyan as "unique in the whole gamut of modern Indian painting".

The film ends all too soon but not before we have had more than a glimpse of the whole range of Benode Behary's work with its great unity and its great variety.

To have conveyed so much in so short a time, to have brought the man and his art in so unified a whole, and to have done this with such understanding and unhurried ease, is a tour-de-force of imagination and cinematic art. Surely, *The Inner Eye* will rank as one of the finest of Satyajit Ray's creations.

Documents

China On Bangladesh

MR Huang Hua, China's permanent representative to the U.N. Security Council, said at the August 10 meeting of the Security Council:

In the opinion of the Chinese delegation, the application of "Bangladesh" for membership in the United Nations should in no way be considered in deviation from the relevant resolutions adopted by the United Nations (General Assembly and the Security Council last year. As is known to all, on November 21 last year, the Indian Government, with the active encouragement and energetic support of the Soviet social-imperialists, brazenly launched a large-scale war of aggression against Pakistan and seriously undermined the peace on the South Asian sub-continent. On December 7 last year, the United Nations General Assembly, breaking through the numerous obstacles raised by the Soviet Union and India, adopted resolution 2793 (xxvi) with the overwhelming majority of 104 votes, the operative paragraph 1 of which explicitly "calls upon the governments of India and Pakistan to take forthwith all measures for an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of their armed forces on the territory of the other to their own side of the India-Pakistan borders". Subsequently, on December 21, the Security Council adopted resolution 307 (1971) with the great majority of 13 votes. Apart from reiterating the demand for troops withdrawal by the two parties, the resolution in its operative paragraph 3 "calls upon all those concerned to take all measures necessary to preserve human life and for the observance of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and to apply in full their provisions as regards the protection of wounded and sick prisoners of war and civilian population." The Geneva Convention of 1949 referred to in this connection stipulates in Article 118 in explicit terms: "Prisoners of war shall be released and repatriated

without delay after the cessation of active hostilities."

However, the actual state of affairs is: the Indian Government has failed to withdraw all its troops to its own territory in accordance with the U.N. resolutions concerning troop withdrawal, and has been detaining over 90,000 Pakistan prisoners of war and civilians. "Bangladesh" is even holding out threats for the trial of Pakistan prisoners of war. This constitutes a gross violation of the relevant resolutions of the U.N. General Assembly and the Security Council. At the same time, "Bangladesh" is insisting on its recognition by Pakistan before it can agree to hold negotiations with the latter. This is simply to collude with India in blackmailing Pakistan and in continuing to obstruct the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. This is indeed bullying others too much. We would ask: whether or not resolution 2793 (xxvi) adopted by the U.N. General Assembly with 104 votes and the Security Council resolution 307 (1971) adopted with 13 votes remain valid? Obviously before the true implementation of the relevant U.N. resolutions and pending a reasonable settlement of the issues between India and Pakistan, and between Pakistan and "Bangladesh", "Bangladesh" is not qualified at all to be admitted into the United Nations, and the Security Council's consideration of "Bangladesh" application for membership is entirely out of the question. Otherwise, where will the United Nations Charter stand? Where will the relevant resolutions of the U.N. General Assembly and the Security Council stand? When one refuses to implement the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, how can he possibly speak of "accepting the obligations contained in the present Charter" and of being "able and willing to carry out these obligations"? This is indeed a sheer hoax and a gross mockery of the United Nations.

To put it bluntly, in resorting to such unreasonable course of action, the Indian Government and its be-

hind-the-scenes supporter the Soviet social-imperialists are aimed at encouraging the aggressor through the instrumentality of the United Nations and continuing to maintain the tension on the South Asian sub-continent. A clear evidence is found in the report that after the Simla talks between India and Pakistan, the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, claimed that pending the "final settlement" of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, she would not permit the repatriation of Pakistan prisoners of war. Approval of these acts of theirs would be tantamount to giving aid and abetment to evil-doings. Consequently, in defence of the principles of the U.N. Charter and in the interests of the entire people of the South Asian sub-continent, it is essential to insist on the following: only when the relevant U.N. resolutions have been truly implemented and only after a reasonable settlement of the issues between India and Pakistan and between Pakistan and "Bangladesh" has been achieved, can the Security Council consider "Bangladesh"'s application for membership in the United Nations.

Letters

Bangladesh

I wonder what worried Mr Kalyan Chaudhuri most, the activities of the CIA in Bangladesh or the activities of "the extreme left forces" other than the pro-Soviet NAP and the Bangladesh Communist Party? (vide his article 'The Eagle over Bangladesh', August 19, 1972). The plain meaning of his writing is that the "extreme left forces" in Bangladesh are busy nourishing the "two well planned political programmes" of CIA, that is communalism and anti-Soviet campaign. He speaks of CIA "gold and guile" also; while the 'gold' is used for the conscious political "extreme forces", the 'guile' is used for the unconscious masses. This is preposterous.

Mr Chaudhuri asks his readers as

well as the "extreme left forces" of Bangladesh to be cautious more about American designs over Asia than with others. The others no doubt refer to the Soviet Union, which seeks "a considerable area of influence in this sub-continent". Mr Chaudhuri is surreptitiously trying to resurrect that long dead and buried "lesser evil" theory of the Social Democrats. He might think the Soviet Union is a lesser evil than American imperialism; others, similarly, have the right to think otherwise. Mr Chaudhuri asks us to forget altogether that throughout, Asia, Africa and Latin America, in spite of sharp contradiction between Soviet and American super-power interests, they have cordial understanding so far as joint exploitation of these territories is concerned. As such, one makes the way smoother for the other. The most recent and palpable example is Egypt.

Unfortunately, it is not the extreme left forces of Bangladesh, but the Soviet Union, the pro-Soviet NAP and the Bangladesh Communist Party which are, through their support to Soviet social-imperialism, paving the way for American penetration. Mr Chaudhuri speaks rightly of the sinister activities of the CIA in Bangladesh but forgets to mention the activities of the KGB there.

EMJEE
Calcutta

Bombay Students

The recent post-graduate students' agitation in Bombay should be an eye-opener to the student community.

The problems of the post-grads began when the university authorities shifted some departments to the new university campus at Kalina. As this is far from the city, in a remote corner, the students demanded better canteen facilities, common rooms, easy transport to the area and better library arrangements. Apart from this, evening students at Fort had their own grievances and demanded that compulsory attendance should stop. The flare-up of the Bombay

Law College students and the subsequent militant Somaiya College students' agitation which broke the 115-year-old dull history of Bombay University had an impact on the post-grads also. There was a unanimous call from all sections of students for an agitation to force the authorities to take positive actions to solve these problems. A programme was drawn up by the five prominent students' organisations of Bombay to co-ordinate the students of various faculties and various post-grad leaders were contacted. This move had the most unthinkable effect on some junior lecturers in the University, who are research students leading the student wing of the Fourth International group. In their haste to assume the leadership, they forgot to mobilise the students of other faculties and, basing their strength on some 30 students of the Sociology Department, who are confirmed Trotskyite cadres, called for a boycott of the classes. In order to keep their leadership unquestioned, in collusion with the University authorities, the students of other colleges were prohibited from entering the campus. The student leaders who went to the campus to offer their support to the agitation were insulted and sent back. They said, "We are post-grads and we do not accept support of anybody else except post-grads". For the first time in the history of student movement, one section of the students declined to receive the support of other sections of students. Thus the agitation was a deliberate attempt to defeat the unity of the student community which would in turn defeat the progressive student movements that are coming up in Bombay. The necessary corollary followed. Left along with 30 students, they called off the strike after a weeklong agitation and staging two sit-ins, without getting any positive decision from the University authorities.

It is for the Bombay students now to analyse the causes of this defeat and correct themselves. The students should understand that unless they stand united and call for and

accept the support of the vast community of students, any movement that might come up would meet with failure. It is high time for the Bombay students also to understand that a parochial leadership without a perspective of struggle is bound to fail.

V. K. MADAN
Bombay

Frontier

The angry tone of Mr Dilip Karmakar's letter (19-8-72) is more subjective than objective. An editor's job is not a very pleasant one because of heavy demand on the space at his disposal; he has to cater to the needs of various readers all of whom may not be as much interested in the same subject as Mr Karmakar supposes them to be.

Mr Karmakar's second charge that the editor publishes only those articles which are written in a sophisticated style is not at all true, though it should be said that it is the editor's exclusive prerogative to see that the style and language of the articles and other things he publishes are of a very high order and conform to the standard he has set for his journal. Even a casual perusal of *The Communist Manifesto* (English translation) shows to what extent and how much Marx must have laboured to make his style and language as perfect as he could. In this connection, Mr Karmakar's advocacy of simple and graceful English so that the contents of *Frontier* may be easily understood by the people even with some superficial knowledge of English seems strange in view of his own style and language. Many non-Marxists also read *Frontier* not because they want to have any acquaintance with Marxism and Leninism (for which they have other avenues) but because its editorials and other comments have a sort of racy smoothness, wry humour and biting sarcasm.

As for the charge that the editor takes liberties with others' writings

because he considers himself to be a master of the English language, I can only say that my experience in this regard does not corroborate the charge. Three of my articles (of which 'Bangladesh' 5-5-72 was the longest and consumed some five pages) have already been published in *Frontier*, and the editor, to be frank enough, has taken very little liberties with them. Whenever he has taken any, he has done it with an eye to the availability of space but this has not done any damage whatever to the themes of the above-mentioned articles. Rather, I should say that the editor's scissors, so often mercilessly aggressive, have in one particular case done some positive good.

It should be remembered that *Frontier* is an English journal, edited by a Bengali; its contributors are mostly Indians who, whatever the grip they have over the language, cannot be expected to write as gracefully and simply as contributors to the *London Times* do.

As for the charge that *Frontier's* progressivism is only skin-deep and that its political line is not based on any deep ideological conviction, I find much validity in it. The only positive point that comes to the surface in the midst of its negativism and non-conformism is its blind adherence to what China says and does. Surprisingly enough, it has all along maintained a rigid consistency in the matter despite many a storm it had had to weather. It is difficult to understand whether such an outlook, irrational and unscientific every way, is considered by *Frontier* to be the proof of its progressivism and genuine concern for the poor and downtrodden. To serve the suffering humanity which it professes to do, it is high time it took a positive role in the country's political developments; if it does not, it will continue to create misunderstanding as it is supposed to be doing at present even among those who love and admire it.

PHANI BHUSHAN GHOSH
Ashokenagar

Some may try to whip up a dead horse as hard as they can, but your pathetic comment concerning the CP (ML) that 'the tunnel is dark and the end is not in sight' (July 22) seems to hit the mark. What should be added is this that the contribution of your learned journal to that effect has been great indeed.

The calculated internment and passing away of the devoted theoreticians and activists landed those vast numbers of blind or brigand young folks, those champions of the revolution not in a void but on the natural lap of the Congress(R).

Nothing could be done for them, in spite of the pious wishes, from a distance and you have a record not far back. Memory knocks the doors and one remembers your now-or-never days; and one wishes your straying, grumbling, groping in the dark alley to end. One wishes you returned. People always value much more the return of living prodigal sons than the ghosts of the 'bygone days.

RUDRA ACHARYA

I appreciate the role of *Frontier*. When it inspires and supports the left movement. But the history of the international communist movement shows that every movement or action which was apparently left, does not always help the actual revolutionary movement. When details of the CPI(ML) movement appeared in *Frontier*, it was understandable. This sympathy, we thought, was due to the reason that many CPI(ML) workers sincerely tried to launch an armed offensive against the government. It was a revolt against the existing social system. But could anybody seriously take Charu Mazumdar as a Marxist ideologue! He wrote many things which had simply no connection with Marxism. According to the 12th August issue of *Frontier*, Charu Mazumdar was believed to have expressed his desire for unity with the workers and peasants of the left parties on the basis of united struggle. But he had no faith in democratic mass struggle and no

political party or group except the CPI(ML) was carrying on armed struggle. So a call for unity on the basis of struggle carries no sense as the very basis (a common struggle) is absent. According to *Frontier* he wrote—"If we are able today to accomplish the work of land reforms in some areas the work of land reforms may be done spontaneously in many areas..." He depends solely on a spontaneously organised (?) land reform in places where his party's leadership is absent.

Charu Mazumdar is typically represented by some of his followers like XYZ. (19 August). *Frontier* should not have printed such a letter. It had nothing political in it and may do a lot of harm to some impatient youths.

ASHOKE RANO
Calcutta

It is really surprising that students of historical materialism should be so much concerned about an independent small-circulation weekly catering to a highly literate, mostly gainfully employed readership (speaking factually—no aspersions intended). People who allot a Cominform role to the journal would be naturally disappointed. The role of a Lenin has been thrust on the Editor most mischievously—the other side of the coin being the ubiquitous 'CIA agent'. I am not aware of any presumption on the part of the journal to influence, not to talk of 'guide' or lead, the 'leftist movement'. I consider the journal as the expression of the hopes, fears and tears of radical elements (in the sense of being convinced of the need of Revolution)—potential 'Ally' or 'Cadre', 'Friends' essentially. I too have been reading the journal from its inception and I feel it is doing fine.

It is interesting that the journal is accused of being anti-CPM. The same reader puts up the specious plea that 'revolutionaries come from the cadres of the CPM'. The attitude of the CPM—the Party—to such revolutionaries who 'went out' is surely recent history to need reminding. It

would call for extraordinary humility (and self-pity) to bless a Party on such grounds alone.

This sort of preoccupation with individuals and trivia, glances (and worse) of suspicion and distrust between fellow-men—this plague still remains to be fought by the Indian Left.

T. R. RAMALINGAM
Calcutta

W. Bengal

Mr I. K. Shukla's article, "West Bengal: Agony and Ecstasy" (August 12) may well act as an eye-opener to those who often claim to be 'intellectuals' and yet scrupulously maintained a silence on the 'ghastly horrors perpetrated in and around West Bengal during the last three years. Mr Shukla's anguish over the lack of any sense of responsibility on the part of Bengali intellectuals is understandable.

But there is one thing I cannot help saying. Mr Shukla's article, seemed to me to be a product of a selective and ill-planned reading of a few Bengali books and journals. The poets and writers in whom he discovers a revolutionary spirit and for whom he spares more than two columns, are, truly speaking, in no way representatives of the people.

সন্নিধান

পরবর্তী সংখ্যা ২রা সেপ্টেম্বর বেরোচ্ছে

এই সংখ্যায় থাকছে :

- মন্বব্য ● জাতীয় পটভূমি—আজকের সংগ্রাম, সমস্যা ও অর্থনীতির সমীক্ষা
- ক্যাসিবাদ ও আজকের ভারতবর্ষ—৪
- বিপ্লবী রাজনীতি প্রসঙ্গে
- আন্তর্জাতিক—বাংলাদেশ / নেপাল / পাকিস্তান / তুরস্ক / ইটালি ● উদ্ধৃতি
- পাঠকের কলম

দাম : ৩০ পয়সা

[স্টলে খোঁজ করুন]

চিঠিপত্রে যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা—

৪নং ব্রড স্ট্রীট, কলিকাতা-১৯

While it is encouraging to see a poet write a revolutionary poem, it is all the more discouraging to see the same poet following a political line which is anti-people and anti-revolutionary. Though Mr Shukla confesses that he has the least interest in the political leaning (or the lack of it) of most of the writers, this is perhaps no excuse for projecting them as 'revolutionaries'. To a socialist, political commitment, or to use Mr Shukla's words, 'political leaning' is of prime importance. In fact, Birendra Chattopadhyay, Amitava Chattopadhyay or Mihir Acharya etc can in no way, be said to represent the struggling people of this State.

What again escapes Mr Shukla's notice is the fact that during those sleepless years of 1969-72, almost all the budding revolutionary writers and poets had to go underground. At a time when there was no security of their lives and when they had to live a hard underground life, can we honestly expect them to write something? But even while underground, some of them wrote poems and articles. Secondly, a large number of brilliant students committed to Marxism-Leninism were butchered or arrested for indefinite periods. The latter are still rotting in jails or lock-ups. When the best brains of the country have thus been destroyed, how can one expect 'revolutionary writings' to kindle the fire of revolution?

Lastly, I personally know that lots of thinking intellectuals, who are at present pretending to be dumb, will rise in revolt against all sorts of reaction when the situation ripens.

KALYAN CHATTOPADHYAY

Calcutta

Jubilee

Your editorial "Jubilee Without Jubilation" (August 12) reminds me of a famous poem by a revolutionary Urdu poet, Sahir Ludhianvi, of which two lines are being quoted here:

"Makan bang gae beghar
bhikarion ke liey.

poshak sal gae nangi kunwarion
ke liey.
(The houses have been built for
the poor beggars,
The dresses have been prepared
for the naked maidens).

So, there is no need today to shed tears over the suicide of an unfortunate primary teacher of West Bengal who did not receive his salary (Rs. 170/- or so) for June, because there are so many "unproductive" teachers in the country. And why bother about the "Tale of Two Cities (Ferozabad and Varanasi)" where the roles played by its main actors (the U.P. police and the PAC) were probably admired by Mr Kamalapati Tripathi, the Chief Minister of U.P.

MOIN EJAZ
Calcutta

Indian Bourgeoisie

Mr Arjun Bandyopadhyay in his letter (July 15, 1972) regarding the role of the Indian bourgeoisie says '...the principal contradiction is between feudal exploitation and the rural masses and another between the weak bourgeoisie and other strata of society'.

It seems that by referring to 'weak bourgeoisie' he wants to establish that in India the 'national bourgeoisie' grows and develops. But how and when? Is it not wholly dependent on the big monopoly houses—the collaborators and compradors of imperialist capital for its capital, market, its growth and development? Is it not as oppressive towards the working class economically and culturally as the 'strong' bourgeoisie—the monopoly houses and the compradors? Even the profits it derives from business are invested in shares or in the 'banks' controlled by the big monopoly compradors, thereby helping further the comprador monopoly houses to spread their roots in the Indian economy. Before coming to 'any conclusion about the 'national' character of the 'weak' bourgeoisie these points should not be overlooked.

Moreover, judging from what our

comprador bourgeoisie did to "break through the semi-feudal capital" by imposing ceiling on land and with what result, it can be safely concluded that the principal contradiction is between feudal exploitation and the masses of our country internally and between imperialism and the masses (excluding compradors) externally.

Solution of the first principal internal contradiction would help resolve the external one.

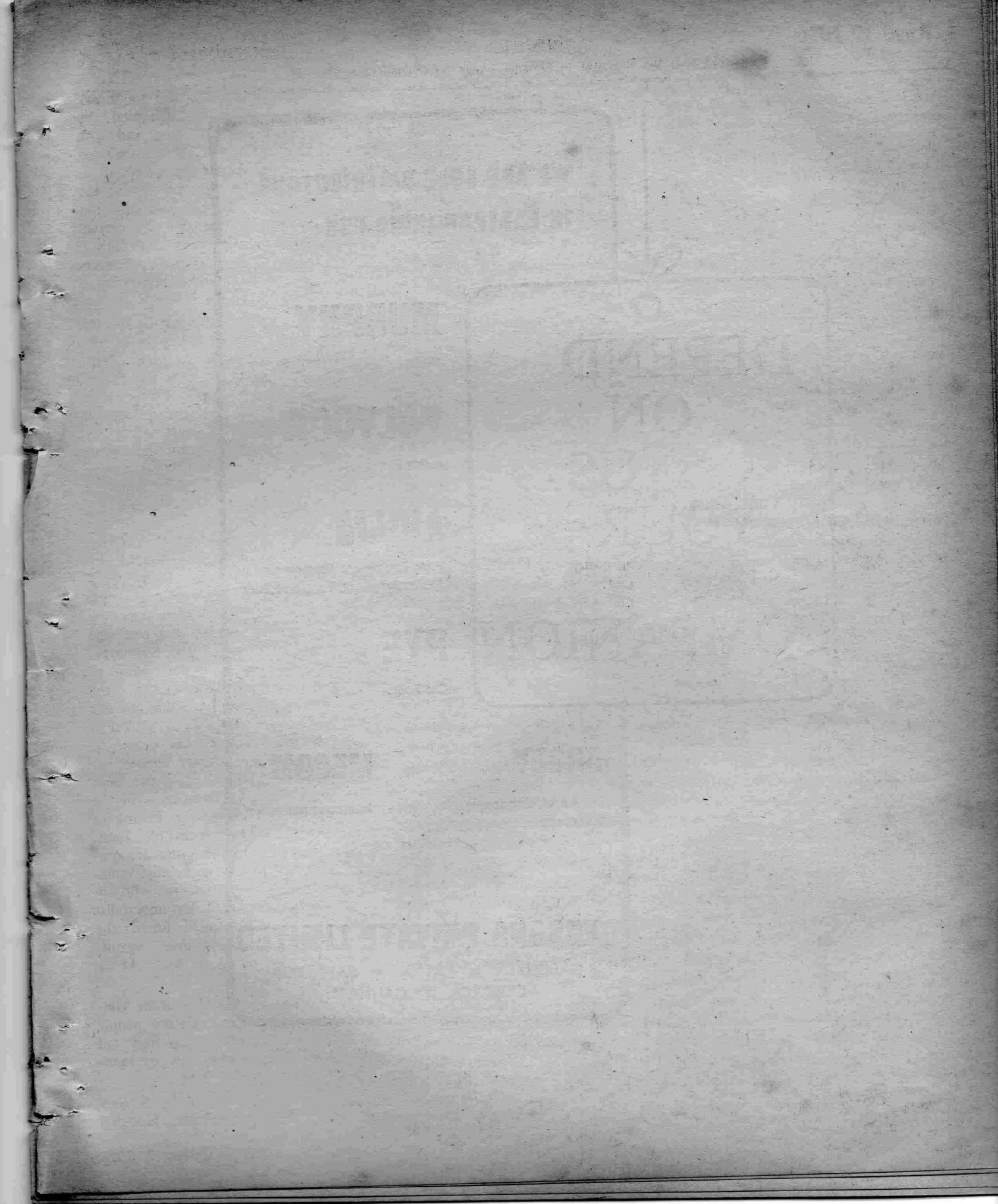
It is in this context that the role of China in global strategy is to be assessed. It is a context where small nations are trying to break the monopoly of 'super powers'. China is on the side of the just struggle against any domination by imperialists or social-imperialists. As for the resolution of the principal contradiction within the small nations, China has faith in the capacity of the working class—rural and urban—to bring about the change and establish proletarian leadership through a long-drawn process of people's war, and by opposing revisionism. China knows that it is the masses who determine the destiny of a country and not the Nixons, the Yahyas, the Sirimavos. Those who swear in the name of Marxism-Leninism here resent the nervous visit paid by Nixon or the diplomatic countsey shown to Yahya or Sirimavo because they have no faith in the revolutionary masses.

Probably Mr Bandyopadhyay does not understand the seriousness of the formation of the Front in Peking of the revolutionary masses of Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia who are united in deeds against imperialist America through armed struggle, who are freeing themselves from imperialist domination and helping to further the world revolutionary struggle against the imperialist camp in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

We can stand by the side of the Vietnamese people, the Pakistani people and the Ceylonese people and all other struggling people only by launching armed struggle here.

S. SEN
Singur, Hooghly

SEPTEMBER 2, 1972



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